



For Christ and His Poor



Grey Nuns' Provincial House
Saint Boniface, Man.
1944

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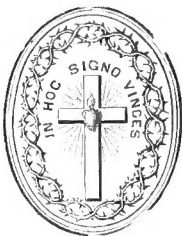
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Sketch of Religious Life
dedicated to young girls



*For Christ and
His Poor*



**Grey Nuns' Provincial House
Saint Boniface,
1944**

IMPRIMATUR:

† *Georges Cabana,*

arch coad of St. Boniface.

St-Boniface, Man.,

March 25, 1944.

Religious Life

"Jesus looking on him, loved him"
St Mark, X, 21.

Who is not fascinated by the touching evangelical scene, when a rich young man, desiring to become perfect, approached Jesus and asked: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?"

"Keep the commandments" and Jesus recalled them to his mind.

The young man replied: "All these have I kept from my youth, what is yet wanting to me?"

Which, when Jesus had heard, looking on him, loved him and said: "Yet, one thing is wanting to thee: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have a treasure in heaven; and come and follow me."

Young ladies, in reading these lines you may recognize your own intimate life-story. In your soul, likewise, perhaps, desires have awakened to accomplish more than what was given as precepts and pondering over the future you have sought for happiness, it may be that you have heard an interior voice say: "Come and follow me". Still you hesitate, you remain undecided. . . Is it really the call? Are all



The Grey Nun sympathizes with all the miseries.
(to the right, a postulant)

these sacrifices necessary to save one's soul? . . . Let us consider the matter and study the question seriously.

Vocation

Firstly, we shall give a precise meaning of the word "vocation". Bishop Gay says that when God creates a soul He gives it a name. The spiritual name corresponds to its personality, it represents the accidental glory and the love which it alone will render with the talents, the temperament and the graces which God has bestowed upon it. Therefore He awaits from that soul a unique love. From the faithful correspondence of the soul to the divine Will of God depends its happiness, even terrestrial happiness, for an abundance of grace is promised in the state in which God has destined it, be it either the married or religious state. It is to be remembered that: the Gospel does not say that the young man was lost, but Jesus was sad to see him reject the perfect way which he had so ardently desired.

Although salvation is possible in the world, we may say that a religious person is one who finds it preferable to follow the means given by Our Lord: leave everything to prove a greater love and to devote one's self entirely to its personal sanctification and for the glory of God.

Signs of Vocation

The following signs are to be found in a person who has received a special call from heaven: a solid piety, a constant will, a sound judgment, an energetic and sociable character and sufficient health. A natural tendency or a certain attraction more or less noticeable is often added — not necessarily — to the signs mentioned above and help to decide in which order one shall enter' The outstanding character of a real vocation is the supernatural intention. The search of temporal security, or comfort, in religious life, is a proof that one is not called to such a state.

Obstacles to a Vocation

The evangelical perfection proposed to the young man made him melancholy because he had great riches. Here is the main obstacle for several vocations indeed: the affection for terrestrial goods. The call is very often unanswered because the person is too rich in worldly goods, or is strongly attached to some beloved ones or even is entangled with future projects which appeal to him and apparently he cannot resist.



The Chapel at the Grey Nuns' Mother House
"Jesus is there and waits for you."

Riches, pleasures and commodities of life. — To acquire these, one has to toil for several years, and at last when one possesses them, life has slipped away and death is near at hand. Whosoever is rich knows many tribulations and sufferings which the poor ignore, yet both however are in pursuit of a happiness which neither can attain because nothing material can ever satisfy a spiritual need. On the other hand to whomever sacrifices these fleeting advantages God promises happiness, infinitely superior to the pleasures of this present life.

FAMILY: — Duties towards your family might claim you at home. As long as these obligations last there is no hesitation possible, God wants you entirely at this task. But — if parental affection is the only drawback, remember that the most loveable son Jesus, did not fear to leave His holy mother to work for the welfare of His Heavenly Father. He left His mother because He loved you and this love led Him to endure the torture of the cross.

Are your parents opposed to your vocation? Pray God to enlighten this natural affection and persevere in your decision. Your respectful submission will overcome such obstacles.

LIBERTY: — Do you dread restraint or the burden of the rule? Doubtless at the convent, it is

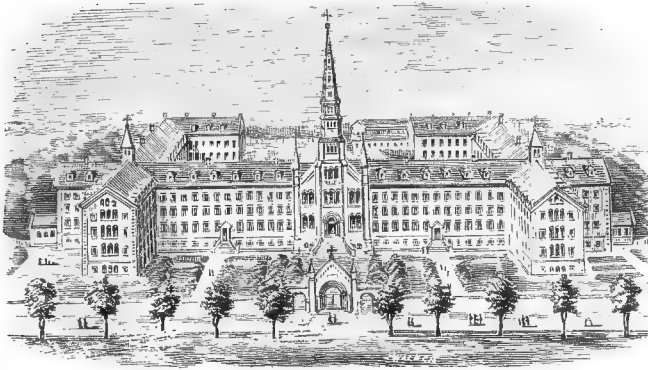
necessary to submit one's will, but the fervent religious sees in this sacrifice an act of love that is perpetually renewed.

You think that the bell is troublesome? No, it gives to the generous soul the occasion to answer as Mary did long ago: "I am the servant of the Lord." Religious obedience fully accepted liberates the soul. Our holy books say: "To serve God is to reign." A pagan Senecas taught the following principle to his disciples: "The strongest man is the one who masters himself." However, since liberty is the most precious gift of God, which He himself respects in us, we greatly increase our merit if we sacrifice it. The costliest jewel that a young girl can offer her spouse, Jesus, is the vow of obedience. This vow keeps in store for the future, unexpected delight.

Let us say that all obstacles disappear before the irresistible motive "love" when the soul has been touched by the grace of God. Answering the Divine Call she says: "Lord, you are longing for a token of affection. here is my weak and miserable heart ready to sacrifice all for Christ.

The Sisters of Charity of Montreal (Grey Nuns)

"I was hungry and you gave me to eat."
St. Matthew, XXV, 35.



Mother House of the Institute

The decision to give oneself entirely to Christ should be followed by a choice between the different ways of putting zeal and love into practice.

Which shall it be: contemplation, instruction of youth, care of the sick, foreign missions or corporal works of mercy in general? The Grey Nuns of Montreal embrace all these forms of devotedness except strictly contemplative life.

The Foundress



Mother d'Youville, daughter of Christopher Dufrost de Lajemmerais and of Marie Renée Gauthier of Varennes, was born at Varennes, near Montreal, October 15, 1701. At 21 years of age, she married Francois d'Youville who died eight years later. He left her burdened with debts and mother of two

young children.

As an intelligent christian soul she liquidated her husband's debts by her strenuous work and even provided for the education of her two sons, both of whom later became priests. Her charity was boundless. She solaced the miseries of her neighbors, she visited the poor, the sick and the prisoner; she went as far as to beg alms from door to door, in order to obtain a decent sepulture for criminals who died in prison.

On December 31, 1737, three young girls offered themselves to associate with her in her life of charity. Living under the same roof, they shared the

different occupations and through the profits of their labor managed to give shelter to a few aged persons.

At this same time in Montreal, a well-known establishment of charity under the name of General Hospital was falling to ruins through lack of money and other resources. The Bishop viewed with consideration the admirable virtues of Mother d'Youville and finding her fitted for great enterprises requested her to undertake the administration of the said hospital. She accepted and took possession of it on October 7, 1747. What generosity and what confidence in God was required by the Foundress to assume such a charge! The Hospital was threatened to be ruined and its sole revenue was merely 150 bushels of wheat yearly.

Mother d'Youville and her companions soon realized their dreams of apostolate. It was marvelous to see their devotedness and self-renunciation. They repaired the building and soon received many different cases of physical sufferings such as. aged men rich or poor, the insane, wounded or invalid soldiers. Mother d'Youville bestowed her maternal care upon all. She even undertook other works for her Institute when she found on the ice, a baby that had been stabbed. From that same day in the year 1754 the first Crib of America was founded. This

deed greatly pleased our Lord for many prodigies were wrought to uphold this admirable work. Let us mention a very striking example. One morning a nurse claimed her salary, Mother d'Youville had not a penny to give, she searched in her pockets and



A postulant's first contact with suffering

to her great astonishment produced a handful of coins which she was positive she had never had in her possession.

After many years of work and suffering for the poor, Mother d'Youville died December 23, 1771. A luminous cross appeared in heaven just above the Hospital at the hour of her death. By this miracle Our Lord wished to honor the crucified life of His servant and the worship she maintained for the Cross which now adorns the coat of arms of her institution. At the present time her beatification is in the hands of the Pope.

Her Spirit

The praise attributed to Mother d'Youville "She greatly loved Jesus and the poor" may serve as a motto to the Grey Nun who is still continuing her life of simplicity, charity and sacrifice. In order to serve the poor with great facility the Grey Nun must be humble. The customs of her community do not tolerate anything extraordinary in her habit and in her ways. Her interior life is kept in safety by the liturgical rites of the Church.

Mother d'Youville's last recommendation on her death-bed was: "May the most perfect union reign among you". From these last words is derived the predominant characteristic of the Institute "Fraternal Charity". The religious esteems a spouse of

Christ in every member of her community and the help given to the poor is considered as given to the Lord Himself.

Sacrifice proceeds from this charity. To love is to give one's self, to forget one's self. Hence, this life calls for real character and whoever embraces it may be assured that nature seldom finds rest but the soul remains in constant contact with the supernatural joys pertaining to its apostolate

Life of Prayer

The Spirit of prayer which is the essence of all religious life, sustains and sanctifies active life. It is through this means that the religious remains closely united to God in spite of all the various occupations which are hers. The secret that keeps a Sister of Charity a true contemplative to accept all sacrifices is that she safeguards her interior life. Every day the Sisters attend the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion. Furthermore the Rule prescribes half an hour of mental prayer, an hour of spiritual reading, the particular examination, the rosary, the Office to the Blessed Virgin, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, a monthly retreat and an annual retreat of ten days. All these are halts to maintain fervor.



Young girls are prepared for their future destiny
at the Industrial School

The Eternal Father, the Sacred Heart and the Holy Cross form the principal devotions of the Institute.

Its Work

Two centuries have elapsed since the foundation of the Community. At the present time it consists of 1922 living professed sisters who devote themselves in 82 different missions considering the most obscure work as answering better to the spirit of their Venerable Mother, the 750 cribs of the Creche d'Youville for abandoned children are the object of their vigilant care.

They direct orphanages, industrial schools, homes for young girls and a few boarding schools where students can complete their studies. At the Nazareth Institute, 125 blind persons are educated annually. Many students have developed their musical talents and have become prominent professors of piano, violin and organ. They also teach painting. In this small sketch of the Grey Nuns' work we can say they are all very happy to be of any help to those who are in need.

Hospitals, Old Folks' Homes and the visit to the poor occupy a great number of Sisters. However

many are called upon for mission work in the North-West Territories. The furthest mission is situated 50 miles from Arctic Circle. In this office where heroism is sought the Superior sends only those who have an ardent desire for the far-off lands.

It is said that a change is better than a rest, so we



The conquest of souls in Indian Countries

may conclude that the various works of the Grey Nuns offer great advantages for health.

The immense merits of the works of mercy are given to us by Our Lord and at the end of time He

shall judge the world according to the Grey Nuns' Code. "I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in naked and you clad me; when I was sick you visited me. Come ye blessed of my Father, and possess the kingdom which was prepared for you since the beginning of the world.

—(Matt. XXV, 31).

Novitiates

Another novitiate besides that of the Mother House, 1190 Guy Street, Montreal, is held at Saint Boniface, Manitoba ever since the establishment of the prairies. A roomy annex was built in 1937 adjoining to the Century Old House. There are also provincial novitiates at St. Albert, Alta., Nicolet, P.Q., and Cambridge, U.S.; the latter is bilingual. There, the two years and a half of probation are spent in peace and prayer by which the novices prepare themselves for their future life of heroic deeds.

Subjects are admitted twice a year on the following dates: February 5, August 5. After six months' postulate and two years' novitiate, temporary vows are taken yearly for three consecutive years, after which perpetual vows are pronounced.

Then follow years of apostolic labor which are the source of the most intimate joys. The glory of



Novitiate of Saint Boniface



A group of novices and postulants

Christ and His reign in souls is the ideal of every Grey Nun. In it lies all her happiness while she prays and works for the poor.

My Vocation in Life

Pray fervently to make the right choice of the married, single or "religious" life. On it depends the happiness of your own soul and other souls in this life and for all eternity.

Pray perseveringly for light and strength.

Behold me at thy feet, O Virgin most kind, seeking to obtain through Thee, the most important grace of knowing what I ought to do. I desire nothing but to comply perfectly with the Will of Thy Divine Son at every moment of my life. Mother of Good Counsel, let me hear Thy voice. It will dispel every doubt that troubles my mind.

I trust in Thee, being confident that, since Thou art the Mother of my Redeemer, Thou wilt also be the Mother of my salvation. If Thou, O Mary, wilt not send me a ray of the Divine Sun, What light will enlighten me? Who will direct me if Thou refusest, who art the Mother of the uncreated Wisdom?

Listen, then, to my humble prayers. Let me not be lost in my uncertainty and instability; lead me along the straight road that ends in life everlasting, Thou, who art my only hope, and whose hands are full of

the riches of virtue and of life, and who dispenst the fruits of honor and holiness.

(300 days Ind. once a day) (My Sunday Missal)

Conditions for Entrance

Admission to the Institute is granted only to young girls who have accomplished their fifteenth year and who are free from physical deformities incompatible with works of charity.

Here are the obligations to be fulfilled by an aspirant before her entrance:

- a) Give a written reply to the questions presented by the Community.
- b) Produce both certificates of Baptism and Confirmation accompanied by one of good conduct signed preferably by a parish priest or another clergyman.

A medical examination is also required and if (at all) possible by the doctor of the Novitiate. The report must be sent with the certificates mentioned above. If treatments regarding eyes, ears, throat or teeth are required, these should be remedied before the entrance.

Pecuniary agreements may be modified for special cases. However the lack of money does not constitute an obstacle for a true vocation.

